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## Land Application

### Frequently Asked Questions (continued)

#### **6) Where are biosolids used?**

Farmers and gardeners have been recycling biosolids for ages. Biosolids recycling is the process of beneficially using the treated residuals from wastewater treatment to promote the growth of agricultural crops, fertilize gardens and parks, and reclaim mining sites. Land application of biosolids takes place in all 50 states.

#### **7) Why are biosolids used on farms?**

The application of biosolids reduces the need for chemical fertilizers. As more wastewater plants become capable of producing high quality biosolids, there is an even greater opportunity to make use of this valuable resource.

#### **8) What percentage of biosolids is recycled, and how many farms use biosolids?**

About 50% of all biosolids are being recycled to land. These biosolids are used on less than one percent of the nation's agricultural land.

#### **9) Are biosolids safe?**

The National Academy of Sciences has reviewed current practices, public health concerns and regulator standards, and has concluded that "the use of these materials in the production of crops for human consumption when practiced in accordance with existing federal guidelines and regulations, presents negligible risk to the consumer, to crop production and to the environment."

#### **10) Do biosolids smell?**

Biosolids may have their own distinctive odor depending on the type of treatment it has been through. Some biosolids may have only a slight musty, ammonia odor. Others have a stronger odor that may be offensive to some people. Much of the odor is caused by compounds containing sulfur and ammonia, both of which are plant nutrients.

#### **11) Are there regulations for the land application of biosolids?**

The federal biosolids rule is contained in 40 CFR Part 503. Biosolids that are to be land applied must meet these strict regulations and quality standards. The Part 503 rule governing the use and disposal of biosolids contain numerical limits, for metals in biosolids, pathogen reduction standards, site restriction, crop harvesting restrictions and monitoring, record keeping and reporting requirements for land applied biosolids, as well as similar requirements for biosolids that are surface disposed or incinerated. Most recently, standards have been proposed to include requirements in the Part 503 Rule that limit the concentration of dioxin and dioxin like compounds in biosolids to ensure safe land application.

*Next week: Continuing series on Land Application*